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I/WE CLAIM:

1. A method for distributing pharmaceutical drug samples, comprising a step of adjudicating a claim by a drug dispenser for the use of a token for a pharmaceutical drug sample at a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims, the token being distributed by a prescriber to permit the patient to obtain the pharmaceutical drug sample from the drug dispenser.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of adjudicating comprises steps of:
receiving at the claim adjudication system a request for adjudication in a first predefined format from the drug dispenser; and
sending to the drug dispenser an adjudication response in the predefined format in response to the request for adjudication.
3. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the steps of receiving and sending are performed in accordance with a protocol for electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.
4. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the steps of receiving and sending are performed using a communications network for communications between a plurality of drug dispensers and a plurality of adjudicators for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

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5. The method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of adjudicating further comprises steps of:
receiving information about tokens that are distributed;
receiving information about the token from the drug dispenser; and
processing the request to provide the adjudication response using the information about tokens that were distributed, the information about the tokens from the drug dispenser, and business logic related to the token.
6. The method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the step of adjudicating further comprises a step of receiving information about the prescribers to which tokens were distributed, wherein the information about the token received from the drug dispenser comprises prescriber information, and the step of processing further comprises a step of comparing the information about the prescriber with the information about the prescriber to which tokens are distributed.
7. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of adjudicating further comprises steps of storing token usage data related to the token, and periodically providing the token usage data to enable evaluation of a pharmaceutical drug sample distribution program.
8. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of adjudicating further comprises a step of providing value-added services.

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9. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a step of entering information related to the token into a pharmacy benefit management system used for dispensing pharmaceutical drugs and for sending and receiving adjudication communications.
10. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a step of distributing tokens for delivery to prescribers.
11. The method as claimed in claim 10 further comprising a step of storing token distribution data related to the tokens, the token distribution data including prescriber information to identify prescribers to whom the tokens were distributed.
12. The method as claimed in claim 11 further comprising steps of:
periodically receiving token usage data related to the token, the token usage data being generated and stored by the claim adjudication system; and
correlating the token usage data with token distribution data.
13. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a step of prescribing the pharmaceutical drug sample for a patient using the token.
14. The method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a step of accounting to the drug dispenser for the dispensing of the pharmaceutical drug sample.

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15. A computer readable medium containing executable program instructions for enabling a computer system to track distribution of pharmaceutical drug samples, comprising:

program instructions executable by a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims to enable adjudication of a claim by a drug dispenser for a use of a token presented in return for a pharmaceutical drug sample, the token having been distributed to a prescriber who provided the token for a patient to permit the patient to obtain the pharmaceutical drug sample from the drug dispenser.

16. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 15 wherein the program instructions further comprise:

program instructions for receiving a request for adjudication in a predefined format from the drug dispenser; and

program instructions for sending an adjudication response in a predefined format to the drug dispenser.

17. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 16 wherein the program instructions for receiving and the program instructions for sending further comprise:

program instructions for using a communications network for communications between a plurality of drug dispensers and a plurality of adjudicators

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for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

18. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 16 wherein the program instructions further comprise:

program instructions for receiving and storing information about tokens that were distributed;

program instructions for receiving and storing information about the token presented to the drug dispenser; and

program instructions for processing the request to provide the adjudication response using the information distributed about the tokens, the information about the token presented, and business logic related to approved use of the tokens.

19. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 18 wherein the program instructions for adjudicating further comprise:

program instructions for receiving and storing information about prescribers to whom tokens were distributed; and

program instructions for comparing the information about the prescribers to whom tokens were distributed with information about a prescriber contained in the information about the token presented to the dispenser.

20. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 15 wherein the program instructions further comprise:

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program instructions for storing token usage data related to the token; and

program instructions for periodically communicating the token usage data to an analysis system to enable analysis of a pharmaceutical drug sample distribution program.

21. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 15 wherein the program instructions further comprise program instructions for assisting in the provision of value-added services.

22. A computer readable medium containing executable program instructions for enabling a computer system to track a distribution of pharmaceutical drug samples, comprising:

program instructions for entering adjudication information related to a token for a pharmaceutical drug sample into a pharmacy benefit management system for dispensing pharmaceutical drugs; and

program instructions for enabling a drug dispenser to communicate with a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims to adjudicate a claim for a use of a token presented in return for a pharmaceutical drug sample, the token having been distributed to a prescriber who provided a token for a patient to permit the patient to obtain the pharmaceutical drug sample from the drug dispenser.

23. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 22 wherein the communications with the claim

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adjudication system is conducted in accordance with a protocol for electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

24. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 22 wherein the program instructions comprise:

program instructions for using a communications network for communications between a plurality of drug dispensers and a plurality of adjudicators for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

25. A computer readable medium containing executable program instructions for enabling a computer system to track the distribution of pharmaceutical drug samples, comprising:

program instructions for periodically receiving token usage data from a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims that adjudicates a claim for a use of the token and stores token usage data; and

program instructions for analyzing the token usage data.

26. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 25 further comprising:

program instructions for storing token distribution data, the token distribution data including information about prescribers to whom the tokens were distributed; and

program instructions for correlating the token usage data with token distribution data.

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27. A computer system for tracking the distribution of pharmaceutical drug samples, comprising:

a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims including means for adjudicating a claim by a drug dispenser presented with a token for a pharmaceutical drug sample, the token having been distributed to a prescriber who prescribed the pharmaceutical drug sample to a patient using the token;

whereby the dispensing of the pharmaceutical drug sample is tracked in response to the adjudication of the claim.

28. The computer system as claimed in claim 27 wherein the means for adjudicating comprises:

means for receiving a message in a predetermined protocol from the drug dispenser requesting adjudication; and

means for sending an adjudication response message that conforms to the predetermined protocol to the drug dispenser;

wherein the predetermined protocol is a protocol for electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

29. The computer system as claimed in claim 28 wherein the means for receiving request messages and the means for sending response messages each comprise means for communicating via a communications network with a plurality of drug dispensers for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

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30. The computer system as claimed in claim 27 wherein the means for adjudicating further comprises:
 - means for receiving information about tokens distributed to prescribers;
 - means for receiving information about the token presented to the drug dispenser; and
 - means for processing the request message to provide the adjudication response using the information about the tokens distributed to prescribers, the information about the tokens presented to the drug dispenser, and business logic related to the approved use of the tokens.
31. The computer system as claimed in claim 30 wherein the information about the token presented to the drug dispenser includes information that identifies the prescriber who prescribed the pharmaceutical drug sample, and the means for processing further comprises means for comparing the information that identifies the prescriber with the information about prescribers to whom the tokens were distributed.
32. The computer system as claimed in claim 27 wherein the means for adjudicating further comprises:
 - means for storing token usage data related to the tokens; and
 - means for periodically providing the token usage data to a pharmaceutical drug sample distribution program for analysis.
33. The computer system as claimed in claim 27 wherein the means for adjudicating further comprises means

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for facilitating the provision of value-added services.

34. A pharmacy benefit management system to control the distribution of a pharmaceutical drug sample, comprising:

a pharmacy benefit management database;

means for entering adjudication information related to a token for a pharmaceutical drug sample into the pharmacy benefit management database; and

means for communicating with a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims to adjudicate a claim for use of the token, the token having been distributed to a prescriber who prescribed the pharmaceutical drug sample to a patient using the token which was presented to the drug dispenser to obtain the drug sample;

whereby the dispensing of the pharmaceutical drug sample is tracked in response to the adjudication of the claim.

35. The computer system as claimed in claim 34 wherein the means for communicating is configured to operate in accordance with a protocol for electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

36. The computer system as claimed in claim 34 wherein the means for communicating is configured for using a communications network for communications with a plurality of adjudicators for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims.

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- means for periodically receiving token usage data from a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims, which adjudicates claims for use of the tokens and stores token usage data, the tokens being distributed to prescribers who prescribe the pharmaceutical drug samples to patients using the tokens for presenting the tokens to the drug dispensers to receive the drug samples; and

means for analyzing the token usage data.

38. The computer system as claimed in claim 37 further comprising:

means for receiving token distribution data for the token, the token distribution data including information about the prescribers to whom the tokens were distributed; and

means for analyzing the token usage data and token distribution data.

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